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ON THE COVER

It's soon to be summer — it's time to go outside. Our Summer Home & Garden Issue is all about the outdoors. Photo by John Wiese Photography

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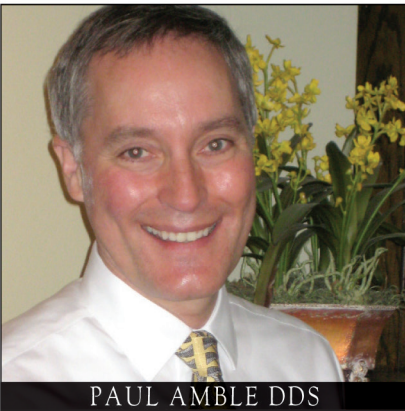
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Walk the Walk

I was walking through St. Anthony Park the other night, after the stores had closed. I love the little neighborhood, close to where I live in St. Paul, with little shops and attractive buildings. It's bustling and beautiful during the day, peaceful and quiet at night. Something caught my eye as my friend and I approached Peapods, the natural toy and baby care store: an iconic HRC sticker was on their front window. A little beacon of welcome. A clear indication that this community is welcome there.

Above and beyond the actual proposed legislation, what's bothered me so much about the Religious Freedom Restoration Acts (RFRAs) that have been trying to make headway across the nation is that I'm second-guessing our business climate more than ever. Before marriage equality in Minnesota, I was pleased when businesses showed their allegiance to the community, because it was more of the exception than the rule (depending on the business and if it had to adhere to the civil rights laws). Now that marriage equality is the rule, each business that wants to be an exception is such a scary disappointment.

That a pizza parlor owner thinks that refusing to cater a gay wedding is actually going to affect same-sex weddings in the future isn't the point, it's that a business owner wants to turn away gay customers. We know this is a problem. We've been talking about how separate is not equal for years and years. Other proposed legislation could affect people who need medical attention and be refused it, if the provider ignores the idea to "first do no harm" for their own religious convictions as being

against homosexuality. In a chilling development, as also mentioned by E.B. Boatner, there is a proposed "Sodomite Suppression Act" to kill the gay men (or, I suppose, anyone who engages in sodomy) in California. That these thoughts exist is no surprise and is always worrisome. That they have some traction is what is so terrifying.

When I'm terrified, I want to circle the wagons. I want to gather people near to me who I can protect and who can protect me and mine. I want to work with people who clearly support the community. I encourage and promote outward displays of welcome, whether they be gender-neutral bathrooms or the fleet of vehicles out there that still has "VOTE NO" or "I Support the Freedom to Marry" or "Love is the Law" bumper stickers on them. Now, perhaps even more than before marriage equality in Minnesota, I find it necessary to suss out how welcoming a company might be to this community. And, even if it's said that a company is welcoming, it's important that they truly walk the walk, not just talk the talk.

As marriage equality might go national and transgender issues are coming more to the fore, it is important to keep the conversations going, to continue pushing forward how necessary it is that business owners relate to this community. It's not just about the wedding industry, but it's also about making sure that gay couples don't get kicked out of their vacation rental homes as happened recently in Texas. In a more proactive tone and relevant to this Home & Garden Issue, it's about making sure that the companies you hire to build your home, to design your yard,

to clear your garage, to move your belongings, and to decorate your family's bedrooms not only see you as equals, but that their staffs treat you as treasured clients.

Now is the time when we start working on quality control in our business dealings. Work with businesses that want to work with us, while also encouraging businesses make clear their inclusion of this community. Look in Lavender's pages and on the website for advertisers who want you to know who they are so you can work with them. Join or consult Quorum as the community's Chamber of Commerce for your business needs. Make note of the businesses that march in the Pride Parade. Look on the windows of stores as you walk through your neighborhood for equality stickers. There are beacons of welcome all around us. Let them walk the walk for you. ■

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OUR LAVENDER

A WORD IN EDGEWISE | BY E.B. BOATNER

Yes, Virginia, There Is Evil

He used as justification for anything he wanted done, writes *Amsterdam* author Russell Shorto, that it be performed “in God’s service and mine, which is the same.”

Not a 2016 presidential candidate, but Habsburg ruler Philip II, who in 1566 poured an army into the Netherlands, along with Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, aka the Duke of Alba, to unleash the Spanish Inquisition on the Lowlands.

Nearly four hundred years later, Philip and Alba are still role models for some.

Pastor Steven Anderson, of Faithful Word Baptist Church in Tempe, Arizona, declares on YouTube that no “queers” or “homos” are allowed in his church, and goes on to call Leviticus 20:13 a “cure for AIDS, which was right there in the Bible all along.” Killing gays, he preaches, is divinely sanctioned, “Because if you executed the homos, like God recommends, you wouldn’t have all this AIDS running rampant.”

Speaking before a Christian group recently, *Duck Dynasty*’s Phil Robertson shared his sick, sadistic scenario in which a hypothetical atheist father is forced to watch as two intruders rape his “little atheist daugh-

ters,” decapitate his wife, then castrate him, laughing, “Wouldn’t it be something if this was (sic) something wrong with this? But you’re the one who says there is no God, there’s no right, there’s no wrong, so we’re just having fun. We’re sick in the head. Have a nice day.” So, the only brake on Christian mayhem is the fear of hell?

California attorney Matt McLaughlin is gathering signatures for his “Sodomite Suppression Act” for the 2016 ballot. Ignoring (or ignorant) that straight folks also practice the act, McLaughlin advocates the killing of convicted gays and lesbians “by bullets to the head” or “any other convenient method,” as well as criminal punishments for those who distribute “sodomistic propaganda.”

That American clergy, celebrities, and members of the bar can blithely condone slaughter and sexual torture for hundreds of thousands of their fellow law-abiding citizens is my definition of evil. That their voices are heard and may be acted upon by listeners is the further dissemination of evil, worthy of those Spanish inquisitors of four centuries ago.

As I write this morning, the Supreme Court of the United States is hearing arguments on the same-sex marriage issue. Godspeed. ■



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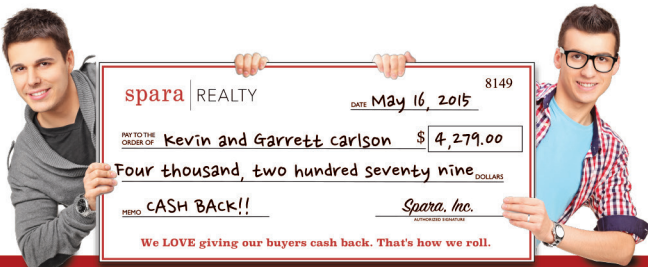
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Interesting Fact: I always wanted to be a gay man because I should've been born a queen.

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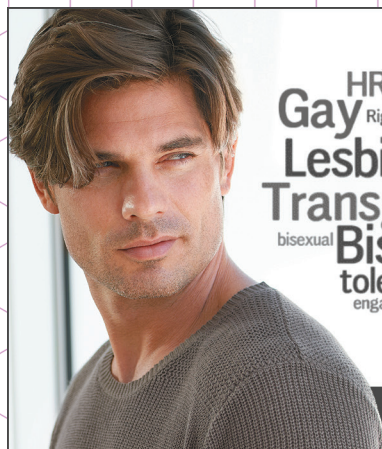


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All-Female Hamlet.

Photo by Richard Fleischman

understand your own story are at the heart of this play." Kathryn Fumie, who plays Hamlet, says, "Our aims are the same as any other show: to be good storytell-

ers and to hold a mirror up to nature."

AND THE WORLD GOES ROUND: THE SONGS OF KANDER AND EBB

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www.jungletheater.com

This joyously vibrant revue showcases mostly lesser-known tunes of the Kander and Ebb canon. Other musical duos, like Rodgers and Hammerstein and Lerner and Loewe, tend to dominate mid-20th century American theater, and for good reason, but it was John Kander and Fred Ebb who weighed heavier into a more contemporary view of adult relationships. Director John Command, who rates as one of the region's surest hands at musicals, infuses the show with both the pizzazz and the depth it warrants.

Kander and Ebb are best known for the sensual and sleazy world of *Cabaret* and *Chicago*, and there are some classics from those shows you'll experience here. But it's those that aren't produced so much that the lucky Jungle audience gets to finally relish bits of: *Zorba*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, *The Rink*, *The Act*, and more.

Therese Walth's rendition of "My Coloring Book" simply devastates. Bradley Greenwald and William Gilness splendidly defer to the Power of Woman embodied in the glamorous Tiffany Seymour in "Arthur in the Afternoon." Betti Battocletti, Emily Rose Skinner, Jon Whittier, and Aly Westberg round out a marvelous cast. Music Director Raymond Berg's rambunctiously effervescent band and Bain Boehlke's sleek New York skyline set ensure that this is a truly "Class Act."

CAMELOT

Through May 17

Ordway Center

345 Washington St., St. Paul

(612) 224-4222

www.ordway.org

Lerner & Loewe's *Camelot* was a stage musical hit so resonant that an entire presidential administration came to be nicknamed for it. The Broadway cast recording of the 1960 work is remembered to have been often playing at the Kennedy White House. Its tunes were as well known by the end of the decade as the Beatles' biggest sellers. Arthur, Guinevere, and Lancelot had been archetypes for centuries, but they re-emerged with an urgently romantic fervor as people yearned for ideals which medieval legend overflows with. In the early '60s people had seen or known well of the horrors of World War II and the "divorce era" would swiftly follow the Kennedy assassination as it was then that the 1960s actually became "The Sixties." Issues of adultery and forgiveness are potent in *Camelot*.

At the Ordway you can see the acclaimed national tour revival. Director Michael McFadden shares how he has made the piece resonant for our time: "I wasn't interested in the pastel 1960's version of Camelot. Instead, I wanted to focus on the characters of King Arthur, Queen Guinevere, and Sir Lancelot and their infamous love triangle that led to war. 1960 was a very different time in how musicals were presented, so we tried to find a grounded and grittier way to bring this show to today's audiences. With the interest in *Game of Thrones*, we thought the world was ready for a different, modern take on this classic piece of musical theater. It's such rich, interesting material, with emotional depth and we tried to come at it with fresh eyes."

THE CRUCIBLE

Through May
Guthrie Theater, 818 S. 2nd St., Mpls.
(612) 377-2224
www.guthrietheater.org

The Crucible looms as one of the very greatest American historical dramas and worldwide is regarded as one of the top 20th century plays. In the 1950s, playwright Arthur Miller stood aghast as the House UnAmerican Activities Committee (HUAC) slandered and destroyed lives of men and women during the McCarthy Era's fanatical anti-Marxist witch hunt. He drew parallels with the 17th century hunt in Salem, Massachusetts, colony of Great Britain for actual witches, wizards, sorcerers, etc. It was also a great opportunity to persecute people for adultery. Recent *Crucible* revivals have drawn parallels with black site renditions and the persecution of whistleblower of both post-9/11 Presidents and Congress. Some have found resonance with the bloody factionalism in 1990s eastern Europe.

Guthrie Artistic Director Joe Dowling has staged brilliant productions of Miller's *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman*. He has also tasked others to direct other Miller plays during his soon-to-end 20-year tenure. But his own final Miller staging of *The Crucible* surpasses all these.

The cast is filled with stellar performances by different generations of Guthrie veterans in superior form: Peter Michael Goetz, Stephen Yoakam, Michelle O'Neill, Ray Birk, Bill McCallum, Virginia Burke, Nathaniel Fuller, Jennifer Blagen, Greta Oglesby, Bob Davis, Melissa Hart, Michael Booth, Ashley Rose Montondo, Chris Carlson, Tyson Forbes, John Catron. When watching all of these fine actors deliver with such crackling, perfectly paced emotional pitches throughout, and with such deeply understood portrayals, you cannot help but marvel at the standard that Dowling has accomplished with his concept of an

acting company over the last 20 years. It is the quality of the acting company over a long period of time that makes an artistic director legendary or not. And with *The Crucible*, Dowling has crossed into the legendary.

The magnificent Erik Heger leads the way as John Proctor, a freethinking farmer, whose disdain toward the megalomaniacal Reverend Parrish (a brilliant McCallum), is construed as some kind of odd mixture between sedition and blasphemy. Massachusetts had essentially become something akin to a theocracy in the 1690s. Heger goes from a defiant Apollo of the frontier to a man emasculated by the men of the church-based state.

His wife, absurdly suspected witch, Elizabeth (a devastating O'Neill), is dragged through the mud with him. They are subhuman heathens in the eyes of Deputy-Governor Danforth (savagely understated by Yoakam).

Richard Hoover's spectral set with its bold presence of trees reflects the ominous power of Fate. Jane Greenwood's period costumes are perfectly intimidating. We see how heavy, dark, clothing was used in that time and place to cover the "sinfulness" of the body that puritanical Christianity trafficked in. No color variation except when it represents the brownness of poverty or touches of vibrancy to show off the play's men of power. ■



The Crucible. Photo by T. Charles Erickson

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MATT AND KIM *New Glow*

Beloved by Rock the Garden audiences and, naturally, The Current, Matt and Kim (Johnson and Schifano; they hail from Brooklyn, if you're curious) make music for folks who found Fun. to be too edgy for their tastes. *New Glow* is as bland as the rest of the band's discography, with lots of straightforward grooves that offer some beats you can dance to, but lack the hooks to keep you on the dance floor. Really, a drum machine would be as effective as "Stirred Up" or "Make a Mess." It's not that simple beats can't work — come on, the Go Gos knew how to keep it simple — it's just that there isn't anything else here to grab your attention during these two- and three-minute bursts.



TUXEDO *Tuxedo*

With titles like "R U Ready" and "Get U Home" it's pretty clear that Tuxedo (retro soul singer Mayer Hawthorn and hip-hop producer Jake One) dig Prince. You can hear the Purple One's late '70s (think *For You* or his self-titled album) grooves throughout the disco-fied funk on this debut set. It's an album made for lazy summer Sunday afternoons, when the barbecue is rolling and you need some smooth tunes on the stereo to set the scene. Or, you can be more traditional and use the likes of "Roll Along" to get the bedroom ready. At times, the music is too interested in recreating that specific time and sound, making the album sound more like a museum piece dedicated to Kool and the Gang and the Commodores.



CRETIN *Stranger*

I'm not sure how much this California hardcore band interests the general *Lavender* readership, but it is an interesting sign of how deep the GLBT community goes. Led by transgender singer Marissa Martinez, Cretin plies their trade in an often violently homophobic corner of the music world (look up Varg Vikernes sometime) with music that is half rage and half fury. Martinez's raw vocals spew out over the likes of "The Beast and the Drowning Bucket" and "We Live in a Cave." Her vocals zero in on the misfits and outsiders of the world, while the band's pummeling sound (if you're not a fan, it will likely just sound like an amplified blender with the occasional guitar solo) can clear mental cobwebs in seconds.



DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE *Kintsugi*

The last few months have been a glory time for fans of early aughts indie rock, with The Decemberists, Modest Mouse, and Belle & Sebastian all issuing new LPs. Ben Gibbard's band comes back with the mix that made them beloved in dorms and Uptown apartments (and my house too): songs that offer a collision of harmony and discord; of beautiful songs that talk about dark thoughts. It's the kind of album that can offer a song titled "You've Haunted Me All My Life" as a centerpiece. A lot of that comes down to the increased maturity in Gibbard's voice and lyrics, which continue to probe his misgivings about love and life without becoming maudlin. Also give credit to the band, who make absolutely gorgeous music here. ■



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Owners Jill Pavlak and Deb Loch confer.

Urban Growler: Science and Art Create Craft Brew and Congeniality

Urban Growler Brewery's creator-owner-operators, Deb Loch and Jill Pavlak, talked with *Lavender* about their seven-year path to becoming Minnesota's first woman-owned and -brewed packaging microbrewery.

When did you decide, as one might put it, "Hey, we've got a barn, let's put on a play?"

Deb Loch: Well, we didn't have a "barn" for a long time; what we had was an idea. And this idea started six years before we opened. It wasn't something we thought of overnight. We both had careers, with what most people would probably say were pretty good jobs, and we both quit our jobs to pursue our passion in brewery.

Jill Pavlak: To go from making a livable wage...

DL: A very livable wage.

JP: ...to eight and ten-dollar-an-hour jobs just to get experience, it was quite an adjustment.

DL: Even going to brewing school.

JP: We moved to California so Deb could get her master's in brewing at UC Davis.

DL: We have complementary sets of skills. Jill is a sales person, people person, networker, connector. I'm a biomedical engineer by training, and,

you know, if I'd known that was perfect training for being a brewer, I would have done it a lot sooner.

When did you finally open the doors?

DL: July 30, 2014, was our first official day.

Were you both beer drinkers?

JP: I like getting together with friends for a beer; I'll probably have a beer. Deb grew up in Wisconsin (laughter) so need we say more? I'm more about the social part behind beer and Deb...

DL: I like the social part, too, but I also love the taste of it, the science of it, the art of it.

Obviously there's a beer spectrum a taproom is expected to have — light, dark, and so on; how did you decide what to brew?

DL: It came about through home brewing; lots of home brewing. I'm a home brewer, so I literally have hundreds of recipes. Some were terrible — the one I made out of our Christmas tree; the beet beer — they went down the drain.

What are some of your other unusual brews? I liked your bourbon-recipe-modified ale.

DL: City Day Ale. That's always on tap. The Candy Corn Imperial Cream Ale for Halloween — we actually pulverized candy corn — was well received.



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JP: That won an award with the Rails and Ales last summer. They did a Light Rail, Green Line pub-crawl, and gave one award for the best beer and the Rhubarb Wit won.

DL: And we have our Plow to Pint series beer where we partner with local farmers to bring their ingredients into our beer.

How many beers did you have when you opened?

JP: Two. Cowbell Cream Ale and a Session IPA. Today we vary between six and ten.

Does your grain come from Minnesota?

DL: A lot of our grain does come from a maltster right here: Rahr Malt-ing in Shakopee. Depending on the beer styles, we'll get the appropriate grains from the UK, from Patagonia, Canada, Germany; it just depends on what I'm making.

Would you give a brief rundown of the process?

DL: The grain starts in the Mill Room. They crush the grain and we augur it up to the Mash Tun, and after the Mash Tun, it gets pumped up into the Lauder Tun, the last place the grain goes. We're extracting all the sugar out of the grain to make the wort. And that's what the yeast ferments; the wort. Sugar-water, basically.

Where does that go? I watched Deb shoveling grain out of the Lauder Tun.

JP: We met a couple at the St. Paul Farmer's Market that has a farm in Wisconsin. They come in every Saturday and pick up three to six blue barrels of grain. They say their livestock loves it. We intend to buy meat from them once we expand the kitchen.

Expansion plans are underway?

JP: The menu will still be small, we plan to add burgers and Wisconsin-style fish fries. It's not a five-star restaurant, we want food that goes great with beer, that complement each other. Hopefully by the time Pride comes around, we'll be under way, or done, but at this point we're still waiting to hear from the Department of Agriculture.

How did you even get funding to start?

DL: In those six years before we opened, we worked a long time on the business plan. It's a little excessive: a hundred and ninety-some pages long.

JP: Deb is the numbers person. I'm a sales person; I just wanted us to rent a little garage space, throw open the door and start selling growlers, but Deb said, "We can't sustain that, we're not going to make a living doing that." And so that business plan is thorough. Very thorough. That's why it was so frustrating with banks; we'd give them this very well-thought-out plan, and they didn't give us the time of day.

Where did you finally go?

DL: A farmer's bank, basically.

JP: Pioneer Bank in Mankato and they were fantastic. It was how I envisioned banks and clients used to do business in the past.

What about your "Founding Members?"

JP: We rented this space a little over a year before we opened. We needed to raise a large sum of money, so we gave tours of this empty shell and gave away food, gave tours, and drawings (we had drawings of what we hoped the space would look like one day). We'd say, "Imagine these beautiful stainless tanks over against the wall, and the beer garden. We sold t-shirts to help pay the rent. Hundreds of people came through, and we raised the money we needed to secure the SBA (Small Business Association) loan. Some of those people get a beer a day for life, some might get two beers a day for life.

And how did you go about ordering all of those "beautiful stainless steel tanks?" "I'd like three of these and..."

DL: In a sense. It's kind of like a car. You get a base model and you can tweak it how you want. Different heights, different diameters, there's different things you can get on them, different manufacturers. There's an infinite number of possibilities.

And you also got married?

DL: Friday the 13th, December 2013, roughly six months before we

opened. Because we didn't have enough stress and planning to do...

Did being gay have any impact on the business end of things?

JP: Well, this started during a very divisive presidential campaign, so that's very gay-related. It was when the Catholic Church sent out a ton of CDs to protest marriage for the GLBT community, and we were like, "What the hell?" We were both raised Catholic, and we thought, "If people would just sit down and have a beer with us they would realize that there is nothing to be afraid of." We decided we wanted to have a place where people could come together, and have a beer and find out what they have in common. We were sick of the divisiveness. So, all are welcome here. It's not a gay brewery, it's not a non-gay brewery; it really is a non-issue here. And transgender people — it doesn't matter.

DL: And we had said we were paying attention to women, but not at the exclusion of men. I think some of the community thought we meant that we were going to be a women's bar. No. We do things to try to bring all people together.

JP: One of the things we did was put a vestibule around our front door. It doesn't sound like a big deal, but often women get cold, guys sometimes have a different thermostat. It may be welcoming people that we don't agree with as well. We're not just for one party or the other, we've had Al Franken and we've had young Republicans. We have some seminarians that play bluegrass music one Sunday a month; that doesn't mean we wouldn't have some other church or belief come in playing some music.

DL: We have giant picnic tables out in the beer garden and people share them.

JP: We encourage community tables. When that does happen, often on the patio, people make new friends.

DL: If people want to have a private party, they can have it upstairs, but the taproom is common space.

What is the beer experience you want to present to the public?

DL: Well-balanced. As the brewer, my style in general is very drinkable, approachable, interesting. So: fun, interesting, drinkable, with moderate alcohol.

What makes Urban Growler stand out?

JP: We keep hearing how warm we are. The staff are wonderful. The space alone is very warm and inviting. We get people in here who aren't even beer drinkers. They might be wine drinkers and they're here with friends or family. So we do a variety of flavors and we have tasting platters so you can get small tastes of a bunch of different flavors. Our goal is to find at least one beer that you like. We want people to feel warm and welcome.

DL: I want to mention that we're more than just a taproom; we're a packaging microbrewery.

JP: That's a distinction I wanted to make, too. We're not a brewpub; a brewpub can't distribute, but they can carry other people's beer and wine and alcohol. We can only sell our beer. We're a packaging microbrewery with a taproom and a kitchen. What that means is that we distribute our beer. So when we're talking about being warm and welcoming, we're talking about more than just the taproom, we're talking about our brand.

What's it like to have the mega Surly Brewery right down the road?

DL: Great! Actually, it brings people together. We're very happy that they are as close as they are and that they didn't locate somewhere else in the suburbs. And we have another brewery, Bang, right across the parking lot.

Is Urban Growler a prime destination for beer connoisseurs? Or do you aim to welcome everyone?

JP: We attract beer connoisseurs and we attract a lot of people who wouldn't necessarily call themselves craft beer aficionados. It's partly the neighborhood, it's also media, the coverage. We've gotten good coverage, I think at first because we were women, now more because of our beer.

What would you like to say to *Lavender* readers?

JP: I'm out on the floor, so I like to know how people found out about us and what their favorite beer is. It would be great if people came through the door and said, "I read about you in *Lavender*!" ■

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Before and After (and Farewell)

By JUSTIN JONES | IMAGE BY JEANA LIDFORS

In October 2013, I approached Brandon McCray with the idea to create a fashion column for *Lavender* magazine. The concept was a child of poverty. And J.C. Penney.

I was raised on welfare until my mother's death in 1998. We lived in a dingy government-subsidized apartment in Hope Mills, North Carolina, and everything around us told me she and I were lesser than everyone else: my friends' lives, their homes, their families were so far away from, so much better than, my own. The start of new school terms meant hearing recaps from peers on "What I Did This Summer" and showing-and-telling about things I'd never have or experience, about friends' trips to places like Disney World and beyond. I wrote down their stories to remember them, to relive them.

My favorite time of year was around Christmas, with the annual publication of J.C. Penney's holiday catalog. In its pages lived kids who wore new outfits and played with fancy toys, who were loved by huge, adoring families, lived in expensive homes, and were envied by all. To me, they were celebrities — "models," I learned they were called.

I wanted to ask them questions. I wanted to know about their moms and their dads, what their bedrooms looked like, what they liked to eat, what dreams they had, what toys were their favorites. I'd make up stories for them. I gave them names and interests. I decided which boys liked which girls and who was the smartest in school. I got to know them on my terms — through my eyes — and made them my best friends.

My interests and means changed as I aged. The men and women in magazines became to me what they are to everyone else: images on paper, props for clothes, hypersexual mannequins pushing product. They fed into an industry that preyed upon the longing, inadequate millions.

And then I met Brandon McCray, a former model. I met his friends in the fashion industry — models, designers, photographers, stylists — and I met their friends, and their friends, and I found in these people qualities far from the stereotypes I'd reinforced upon their industry. The people I met were kind, genuine, brilliant, modest, and they welcomed me warmly. Models gracing the pages of international fashion magazines, nationally acclaimed photographers and award-winning designers and stylists embraced me — who had no fashion sense or experience — with no pretense. I learned that they turned their backs to labels in favor of quality and style: "LVs" splashed across handbags and red-soled heels were impressive to the mainstream, but fashion to true men and women of style meant beauty through artistry: thousand-dollar gowns were wonderful not for their price tags or designers, but for their presence and genius. "Who are you wearing?" was more than a question about clothes. It was a question about one's adaptation of another's work — a question of visual, if inadvertent, interpretation. Fashion was fashion, of course — inspired superficiality — but what art can't admit the same?

I *had* to write about this community — not about clothes or accessories, but about the stories behind them. I wanted to know their makers' talents and memories, what made them who they were, what passions kept them going. I wanted to know them on their terms — through their eyes. So I approached Brandon. He was on board right away.

Brandon and I spent more than 50 hours brainstorming a concept for a quarterly style column that would cover Midwest fashion through a different lens: we'd publish content focused on the intimate makings of the Twin Cities' most interesting fashion personalities. From photographers and stylists to designers and shop owners, from industry veterans to undergrads looking for portfolios, we'd cover them all. We wanted to give the Cities a peek behind the curtain, into what makes up an industry shadowed in misperception and criticism. In however small a way, we would humanize fashion; we'd find the strings that tied together the fashionistas and mainstream, rather than the titles that separated them.

Our resulting proposal to *Lavender* was tidy. From the hues of our headlines to

the typeface of our text, to the schedule and topics of our coverage and editorials, we had assembled an unassailable pitch.

Except that we didn't have a name. Fifty hours of planning and we were missing the most important part.

We didn't want our column to be a generic extension of its parent publication. "Lavender Fashion" was too boring for what we had in mind. We needed a title that said "fashion" without saying "fashion," but something that intrigued people who heard it, something unique, something that'd make them stop.

Our eventual name — "Lav.fash" — came from a guy with dreadlocks at a packed coffee shop who'd left behind a copy of *Lavender* under a copy of *Metro*, arranged in such a way that only "L-A-V" in *Lavender's* title was visible. Throw in an unsettling punctuation mark and an abbreviation for "fashion" and — boom — we have a descriptive title that literally makes one stop mid-sentence.

Since then, *Lavender* has given us complete creative control over this space: an unprecedented show of confidence in print publishing. Managing Editor Andy Lien has been our biggest supporter. Without her, we wouldn't exist.

Fast forward six issues and here we are, just over a year old. We've profiled the father-son team behind Atmosfere, powerhouse clothing designer Emma Berg, Twin Cities' emcee-in-chief Grant Whittaker, national photo stylist Hollie Mae Schultz, academic-turned-breathalyzer/designer Stephanie Lake, and, in this issue, an emerging queen of Midwest fashion, Caroline Hayden. We've covered numerous fashion events, served as red carpet hosts, have spent more time pulling clothes for photo shoots than you can shake a stiletto at, and have made some of the best memories of our lives. The people we profile, and those with whom we've worked and met, Brandon and I will always consider family. They've opened up to us in ways no industry player ever "should" a media outlet, they've entrusted us with their lives' most precious, indelible moments, and we only hope we've done well by them.

Now Lav.fash enters its next chapter. By the time you read this, I will have relocated to Boston for a career opportunity I simply can't miss. I considered briefly maintaining an active role in contributing to Lav.fash from afar, but doing so would be selfish. Our brand has been built upon close proximity — geographically, professionally, personally — to our subjects.

This brings me to John-Mark, whose name will grace the Lav.fash masthead beginning with our September issue. After considering dozens of people to invite on board as my successor, Brandon and I agreed without question that John-Mark would be the perfect fit. As a renowned dance choreographer and lecturer, with a background as a features editor for *Nu-Mode Magazine*, as a model who's walked the runways of New York Fashion Week and who's done so much to support the Twin Cities' fashion community, John-Mark will probably be better at this than I ever was.

I will remain part of Lav.fash, only in the backseat. I will continue as an adviser and act in the capacity of an editor, but only for the most essential decisions. From here on out, the voice of Lav.fash, its direction, and its evolution will be stewarded by Brandon and John-Mark. I'm excited to see what new heights they'll reach, and I'm jealous as hell that I won't be here to see it firsthand.

If I've learned anything from this experience, it's been understanding that the difference between "fashion" and "style" is the difference between how we present ourselves and accepting who we are — concepts best left in sync — and, in at least one instance, the difference between writing a fashion column and admitting to still being nothing more than a boy still star-struck flipping through the pages of a magazine.



Fierce into Sunrise

JUSTIN JONES | BRANDON MCCRAY

Somewhere in the past, a little girl in tiny denim overalls kneels in loose garden soil, hard at work on a miniature harvest. One after another, she pulls potatoes from their patch, brushes them on her jeans, and tosses them into a red wagon. The chore, like all of her chores, fills her with accomplishment; she works tirelessly by self-decree. As dusk settles, the girl's mother calls her to supper and hesitantly she stands.

She stands before a seamless white backdrop, two decades later, staring shyly at her feet as a wardrobe stylist rearranges her dress, as a makeup artist freshens her face, as a photographer adjusts his lighting. She laughs awkwardly because she's nervous, but her demeanor is misread. Behind her quiet blue eyes roams a colossus.

Caroline Hayden is a stalwart of Midwest fashion. Among her hallmarks is an unflinching devotion to perfecting the fundamentals of her garments: the weights of their chiffon, the depths of their texture, the nuances of their fabric. Anything added to these basics is secondary and beholden to the strictest narrative. She strives to achieve in her clothing fashion's most difficult concept to master: simplicity — the balance between magnificence and meaning without distraction, the uncompromising position that everything comprising a garment is exhaustively thoughtful, from every technical detail to every embellishment. Yet her designs are far from austere; they are freeing and free-flowing. Her clothes inadvertently adhere to the adage that, "In character, in manner, in style, in all things, the supreme excellence is simplicity." She's too modest to use such language.

Her work ethic is well founded. Born in Perham, Minnesota, young Caroline found pleasure in housework and fed intent to the banal: she saw her charges to completion and avoided the insurmountable. "Aspirations" for Caroline equated not to "dreams," but to "possibilities." Dreams were for the insatiable and foolhardy; her domain comprised realistic, achievable opportunities. A career in fashion wasn't one of them.

Caroline spent much of her childhood in her mother's quilting shop, lost in textile labyrinths, enraptured by patrons' stories of times-since-when. Enamored

in this environment — in the effervescence, fragility, strength, blank-canvas wholeness of fabric — in the complexities and fundamentals in principles of design, she found fashion. But reason kept her out. In adolescence, married to pursue only what she deemed readily attainable, Caroline stifled notions of a career in fashion. Such a pursuit for a daughter of the Midwest was mindless; the white-capped runways of New York, the red carpet avenues of Hollywood were impossibly distant. Caroline buried her passion under an avalanche of extra-curricular activities.

The forgotten didn't die.

As an adult, Caroline reframed how she thought about fashion. She decided to pursue design as a hobby, with no expectations for critical or commercial acclaim. She sold custom gowns to personal clients and shared pictures of completed garments online. Doing so didn't afford Caroline the glamor she once envied, but she'd found her medium — until a phone call came from national photo stylist Hollie Mae Schultz, who'd seen her designs online.

"One day I got a call from this stylist [based in] Minneapolis, who asked when I picked up the phone, 'What are you doing? Why aren't you showing? You *need* to be showing.'"

With Hollie Mae's support, Caroline debuted at the biannual fashion mega-show Envision in 2011. The event resulted in what was the first in a chain of positive critical reactions that led to innumerable others. Her designs have since been featured in publications such as *Jute*, *Minnesota Bride*, and *Chaos*.

And now Caroline stands awkwardly in front of a photographer for this magazine, surrounded by stylists. There's something about her here. As she looks into the camera and then away, as her makeup is refined and her hair tweaked, as instructions to pose come from every angle, and as we consider her inspired designs born so beautifully from thoughtful simplicity, it occurs to us that somewhere beyond those blue eyes, fueling everything she is and behind everything she produces, still kneels a little girl in tiny denim overalls, tilling away long after sunset, fierce into sunrise.

For more, visit www.CarolineHayden.com.



PHOTOGRAPHER: JAAFAR ALNABI | HAIR AND MAKEUP: NASEEM RAFIEI



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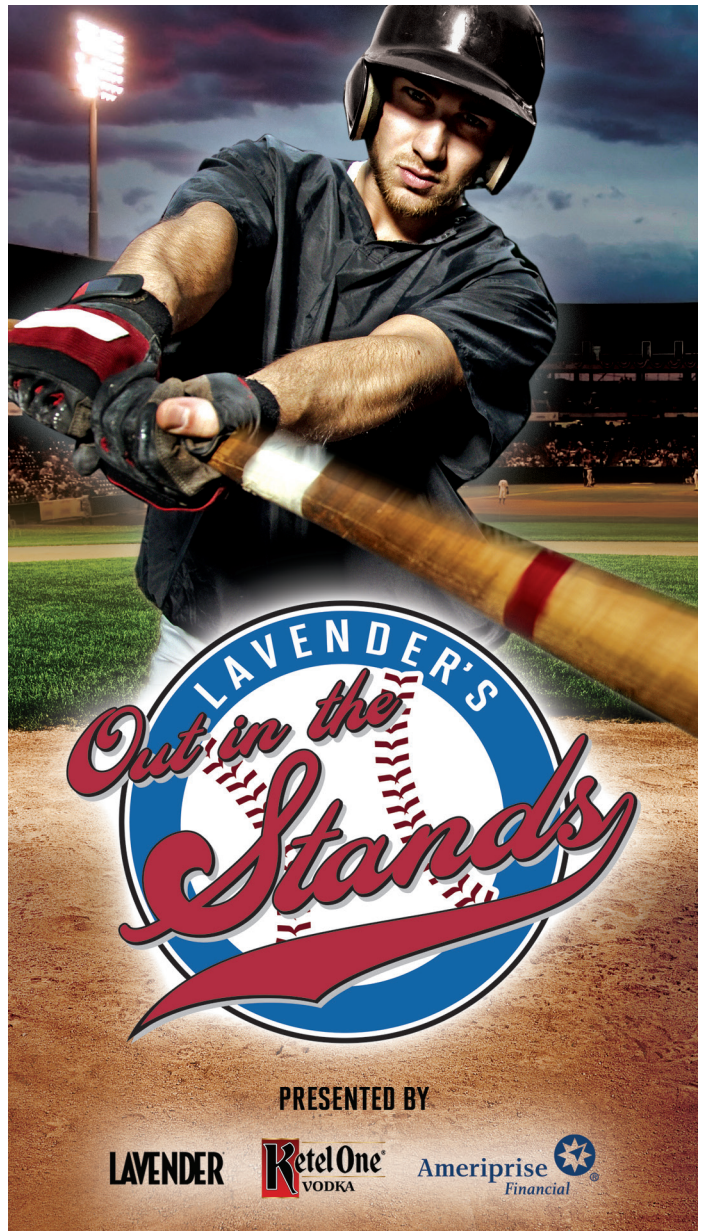
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OUR SCENE

TRAVEL | BY CARLA WALDEMAR

Home of President (and General) U.S. Grant.

Galena — Take It For Granted

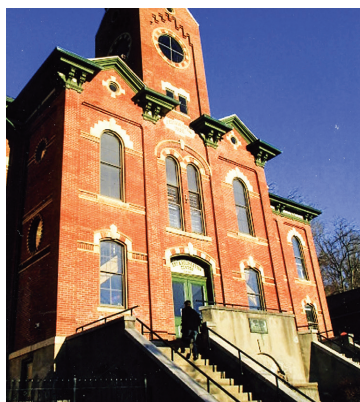
For history buffs, it's party time: the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War. The spidery handwriting weaving across the fading document General Grant penned for General Lee's surrender at Appomattox in April 1865 made it official, and it's right here: preserved in the Old Market House in Galena, Illinois. Oh, there's Grant's top hat, too, and the cigar box that fueled his 20-a-day habit when he made his home in Galena (pop. 3,500 today but 14,000 back in its prime, when its citizens gave him a mansion there in gratitude for victory).

I'm hot on his trail in this corner of the map where Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa convene, about five hours from the Twin Cities. I head for the general's brick mansion marshaling the bluff of this sweet river town, where Georgie, our tour guide, tells us he trained troops on the front lawn. There's his statute, in Grant Park, supervising a vista that includes his more modest original dwelling on High Street; his dad's leather shop, where the young man was put to work; the Methodist church of 1829 he attended; the dowager DeSoto Hotel, where he plotted election campaign strategies (as did Lincoln); the Abbey House B&B, in whose gazebo he smoked those infamous cigars with his neighbor; and the Galena and U.S. Grant Museum, home of the grand, mural-size "Peace and

Union" painting by Thomas Nash where he's portrayed with Lee, along with his own generals (nine of whom came from right here in Galena).

The museum also distills the story of the original Native Fox and Sauk tribes who chose this site to live, defended by its surrounding hills, which harbored a goldmine of — not gold, but lead. Galena's lead mines (peer down the scary shaft of one right inside the museum) produced the bullets that fueled the war. Then, aside a panorama map, grab the riverboat's wheel and "navigate" it into port in the boomtown when, 150 years ago, Galena was bigger than Chicago.

The boom funded one ultra-gorgeous mansion after another, making the town today "an outdoor museum," decrees Steve, our guide on a history-meets-mystery ghost tour along Main Street, past sleeping Turner Hall (Ooh! Blinking lights!) back to the corridors of the Hotel DeSoto, where you may — just may — encounter the ephemeral Lady in Black. Today all Main Street's brick shops, and the gracious Georgian houses on Bench Street just above it, are preserved on the National Register of Historic Places. After scaling the town's climbing walls that masquerade as streets, you're in shape for the famous Galena Triathlon: eating, drinking, and shopping.



(From left) Old cobblestone street downtown Galena; Galena church from 1800s on National Registry; Dennis leads the tour at Blaum Bros. Distillery. Photos by Carla Waldemar

EAT

Twenty-seven restaurants in town, they tell me, and nary a chain (and that doesn't count the 35 B&Bs that conduct their own breakfast marathons). Patrolling Main Street, you'll discover most of them, starting with Chef Ivo's, King of 'Cue, who slathers his pulled pork and ribs with homemade sauces. (Connoisseurs know to start the meal with the fried dill pickles. Just sayin'.) Embe goes all-natural, from soups like cream of mushroom with artichokes and sundried tomatoes, all the way to hot bread pudding. Live music on weekends, too.

What to order at Fried Green Tomatoes? Well, duh. Here they're topped with mozz and marinara to salute the kitchen's Italian slant, which favors pork osso buco, chicken piccata and pesto salmon. At neighboring Vinny Vanucci's, there's more of an Eye-talian flavor, thanks to Nonna's recipes straight from the toe of the boot. Here a doggie bag is not merely an option, it's a requirement. Same might be said of the Golden Hen's breakfast omelets and Benedicts, which come with a amuse-bouche of rice pudding.

"Come to Galena's table," they welcome you at One Eleven Main, whose craftsmen chefs revere local viands and produce. The beer-braised pot roast was mighty good, the salmon with candied pecans and brandied sweet potatoes even better. Choose your food loyalty, if you can, at Fritz and Frites. Francophiles gobble the mussels, the choucroute garnie, the cassoulet, while fans of German cooking are forced to choose between a litany of sauerbraten and schnitzels.

Galena's oldest restaurant — and, many would argue, best — is the Log Cabin Steakhouse, serving aged and hand-cut beef since 1935. The Rigopoulos family will sear those hand-hewn steaks Greek-style, then side them with verging-on-illegal hash browns: one bite and you're addicted. My lamb chops came with the boast "The Rigapoulous family's claim to fame." No lie; just a cheer of "Opa!" as the saganaki starter takes fire.

DRINK

There is great drink to be found in the many restaurants in town. Also recommended are the Galena Brewing Company's primo beers and Ga-

lena Cellars' tasting room, or a tour of the winery itself. Or the magnificent Rocky Waters Vineyard, a short, pretty drive into the hills. Or Blaum Bros. Distilling Co., founded in 2014 by two brothers dedicated to using local grains (wheat, corn, rye, barley) to power their distillery, where Dennis, our genial tutor, conducted an easygoing tour of the plant, then offered sips of their moonshine; a clean, clear vodka; and an herb-forward gin.

SHOP

Do a little weight-lifting at home to get in shape, then hoist your bags at comfort stops like Book World (lush selection of Grant, Lincoln, and Civil War history); Galena Garlic Co. (rubs, powders, pickles); a cadre of antiques shops that would keep The Pickers in business far into the next century; a lovely pottery shop attached to Abe's Spring Street B&B — a former brewery now housing guests in rooms where proprietor/ceramic artist Charles Fach has installed his figured tiles around the potbellied stove and kitchen counter as well as elegant iron bedposts topped with nymphs of his making. He offers pottery workshop stays where guests make and glaze their own dinnerware, then sup from it at a candlelit feast. More local talent is on display at the Galena Center for the Arts atop the hill.

Don't miss the Sweetheart Bakery, or Root Beer Revelry store (mix and match your own six-pack from old-time brands like Dad's, Mom's, Cap'n Eli's, and River City). Upcycle Gypsy, is my personal fave among the town's boutiques, is the domain of Kelly, a lass who creates its vintage-look jewelry and answers the phone with the optimistic message: "Best shop in Galena!" Oh, and don't miss the legendary socks shop across the street (by now you'll need a bigger size, anyway).

The city's stairs provide a free workout, or rent segways, bikes, kayaks, skis, whatever. Sign on for fishing, golf, and hot-air balloon excursions. For a list of the town's many festivals and events (everything from Wine Lovers' Weekend to the biggest, baddest Halloween Parade in the Midwest) check out www.VisitGalena.org. ■

END NOTES: GAYLENA

True factoid. A Jeopardy question asks, "What town has the biggest percent of GLBT residents?" You probably guessed the answer. No designated gay bars here because there's absolutely no need; everything's been integrated for, like, forever. The city museum is working on a permanent exhibit of the town's gay community and its contributions. Newcomers and newlyweds Robert and Douglas, from Chicago, recently purchased the Aldrich Guest House — a gracious B&B erected in 1845 by the town's postmaster, then Congressman, from which the present owners tossed out mile-high stacks of doilies ("terrifying") in favor of a clean, contempo vibe. Enjoy wine happy hours in the gorgeous garden, too.

OUR SCENE

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Ren Rushold and Steven Patton

Left to right: Steven Patton, Mr. Twin Cities Leather 2015, and Ren Rushold, Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2015.

Ren Rushold, Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2015, and Steven Patton, Mr. Twin Cities Leather 2015, will be competing and representing Minnesota at the 2015 International Mr. Leather contest weekend (May 22–25 in Chicago). I recently had a chance to conduct a joint interview with them.

It seems like you two are almost brothers. Did you know each other before you both won your titles?
Ren Rushold: Yes.

Have you supported each other as you competed?

Steven Patton: I was his handler when he competed.

So you sort of planned it this way.
SP: We hoped that it would happen this way, actually.

RR: We had joked about it, like wouldn't it be fun if we went to IML to compete together? And then it happened.

Steven, what did you think when Ren won?

SP: He could hear me screaming from the other side of the bar.

And when Steven won—

RR: I was in the very front row with my phone making sure I was recording every second of it.

How far is the cooperation going while you both prepare for the IML competition?

SP: I think we both share the feeling of, if I went to IML and I won, and I didn't help him as much as I could, that doesn't say very good things about our friendship or about my character.

RR: While we each take the competition very seriously, we're in this together. I could not have been where I am without him. Going to IML, if I win, or if I place in the top 20, or even if I get dead last, I will know that, because of what we did together, I was confident enough to go that far.

I want to note at this point that both of you are sporting freshly done mohawks.



RR: We are twins — that's the joke.

SP: We had a photo shoot yesterday, and just as a joke we switched sashes for part of it. People frequently mistake us for each other.

What do each of you want to accomplish with your local title?

SP: My major goals are trans-inclusiveness and generational connectedness.

RR: My goal is not so much to be a public figure. I would rather have one-on-one interactions. I have always tried to bring as many people as possible into the community and really help them find their place.

How are each of you involved in the local community?

RR: I help out the Atons occasionally, and I'm a full member of the North Star Kennel Club.

SP: I was a member of the Imperial Court of Minnesota for a few years when I was younger, and I helped found the chapter of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence here in Minnesota.

What was your name with the court?

SP: My full protocol, as given to me by Empress 14, was "the epic Zachira Zabbertini Haldane Berglin-Rhodes Seville Cartier."

And with the Sisters?

SP: I am still currently a nun. Sister Marsha Dimes, which I took from Torch Song Trilogy.

Some people would say there is a clash between drag and leather.

RR: I view it as the same as being a puppy and a leatherman at the same time. You can be whatever you wanna be.

SP: My family has been doing it for generations — Tiffany Cartier/Mitchell Nash, Sadie Seville/Gene Lippa. My drag mother Amanda Chance Evans is a biological woman who does drag as a drag queen and was also very involved in leather with the Corn Haulers. I've always been a leatherman and I've always been a drag queen and they are two sides of the same coin.

What are your thoughts as both of you look forward to the IML weekend?

SP: We need energy drinks.

RR: We're both competitive, we both have great drive, we want this.

SP: But it's also about brotherhood and having fun for both of us. It might sound kind of



Aurora Lee, Ms. Minnesota Leather Pride 2015; Boy Woody, Minnesota Leatherboy 2015; and Ivan Nunez, Minnesota Leather Sir 2015.

cliché to say that but it's true; it's who we are together.

RR: Somebody had said that Steven and myself are not going to compete as a team, that we're going to compete as individuals for IML. While logistically that is the truth, I completely find that statement untrue. I'm finding myself in my spare time drawing up mock interview questions for Steven just to get him prepared for the interview portion. I wanna make sure that he's on par if not better than me at IML because I want him to do the best that he can do, and he feels the same about me. So we're going to compete separately, but we are a team.

SP: We're a team as friends, we're a team in

trying to help this community, and that doesn't change just because there's a big hat at the end.

END NOTE:

Three New Minnesota Leather Titles: On Saturday evening, April 4, three new Minnesota leather titles made their debut at the Minnesota Leather Pride Weekend event at The Saloon. Pictured above: Aurora Lee, Ms. Minnesota Leather Pride 2015; Boy Woody, Minnesota Leatherboy 2015; and Ivan Nunez, Minnesota Leather Sir 2015. The weekend's contestants also included Wolf Forrest, Joshua Conrade, and Mary Jane Akin. All three new titleholders will go on to compete at the Great Lakes Leather Alliance weekend in Indianapolis, October 1–4.

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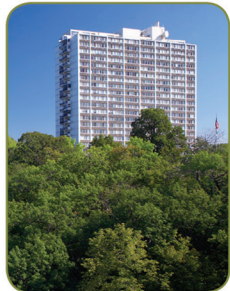
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The Women of Skawa Island

Anthony Bidulka
Insomniac Press
\$19.95



Who would shipwreck three women on a remote South Pacific island? How? And why? Adam Saint, former Canadian disaster recovery agent, would like to know. As would the reader of this fast-paced follow-up to *When the Saints Go Marching In*. There are secrets within secrets, one of which has to do with Adam's belief that he will die soon of brain cancer — the reason he has left the agency. Without his usual resources, he must investigate alone (with some civilian help) but the more he uncovers, the more bizarre and improbable the women's story becomes. After all, they say they were marooned a decade ago. Finally, there is nothing left but to make the trek to Skawa. And then it all gets much, much darker.

Behind the Mask: The Life of Vita Sackville-West

Matthew Dennison
St. Martin's Press
\$29.99



Raised a lonely, only child at Knole, the house of her ancestors she could never, as a female, inherit, Vita Sackville-West drew into her own mind, living behind the fortress of her "mask." Attracted to women, she nevertheless married the homosexual Harold Nicholson and they remained together for life. Nicholson was patient, terming her escapades — eloping to France for four months with Violet Trefusis (née Keppel) — "be-guines." Dennison chronicles Vita's loves minutely, though is sparing with information about her affair with Virginia Woolf who made Vita the hero of her *Orlando*. Vita had literary success with her poetry (*The Land*) and novels (*All Passion Spent*), did radio broadcasts, and was an internationally acclaimed gardener; her spectacular garden at Sissinghurst Castle, Kent, is still widely visited.

I Left It on the Mountain: A Memoir

Kevin Sessums
St. Martin's Press
\$25.99



Sessums' first memoir, *Mississippi Sissy* (Lavender 340) only took the narrator to age eighteen. *Mountain* starts on the morning of his 53rd birthday, a couple of hours before interviewing Hugh Jackman, a month before his birthday present to himself, a 500-mile walk along the Camino de Santiago de Compostela, Spain, and a couple of years after climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro — the mountain of the memoir's title. However, although he succeeds physically, Sessums remains emotionally empty, his life floundering in sexual excesses and drug use until he finally embraces the word addict. Wrenched, at the bottom, he relinquishes his beloved dogs, Archie and Teddy, and begins his climb back to life and feeling. A born Southerner, Sessums' language and story redeem the tale from melodrama and mounts into the empyrean.

Secret Gardens of the Cotswolds: A Personal Tour of 20 Private Gardens

Victoria Summerley - Photos by Hugo Rittson-Thomas
\$29.99



Who doesn't feel even a tiny frisson at the thought of entering a secret garden? Author Summerley yielded to her own desire, bolstered by the more pragmatic rationale of recording for posterity these living treasures of southwest Britain. Working separately, marshaling their words and images, she and Rittson-Thomas created this collection of twenty superb examples of planterly pleasure. Some are open, others remain "secret," closed to the public. Summerley writes with a sure touch, vying with Rittson-Thomas' gorgeous images to entertain with a mixture of history, horticultural arcana, and anecdote. Robert Cooper, current owner of Abington Manor, Abington, was moved to share, "The more gold and purple the foliage is, the better. I have got to the age where I do not need to conform." ■

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Photo by John Wiese Photography

BY TOM KERBY

Spa day...a time to recharge and rejuvenate. Anyone who has ever had a spa day knows you come back refreshed and relaxed with a new outlook on life. After a Minnesota winter, just as we treat ourselves to a spa day, we should do the same for our gardens. Excited by the prospect of spending time outdoors and anticipating the warm days of summer, it is the perfect time to take a good look at our gardens. With a little effort and helpful

planning from a landscape architect or designer, you can set the stage for greater joy and fun living in your revitalized garden.

Our day at the spa starts with relaxing, settling into the moment and focusing on the parts of us needing the most attention. You and your designer should spend a little time in your landscape, prioritizing the garden to-do list.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 44 ➔

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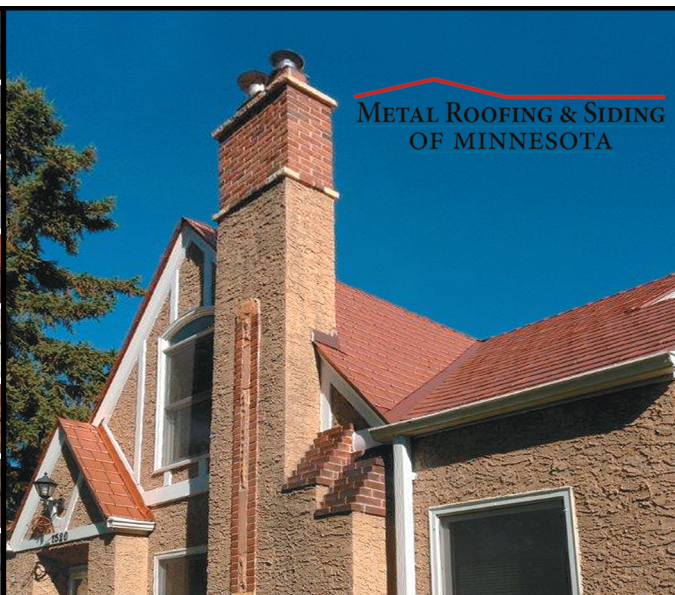


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HOME & GARDEN

SUMMER



Photos by John Wiese Photography

Start with the trees and shrubs. Your garden may be overgrown; trees and shrubs could use a little pruning; and some flowers may be fading. Pruning allows more light penetration and better air circulation through the garden. A designer can direct the potential that is hidden beneath the brambles. Pruning, if done correctly, will offer good form to plants, rejuvenate a tired shrub, or control size to a more fitting scale for the garden. I always remind my clients that a newly planted landscape can only become more beautiful with time if they give it some attention every once in a while. Even if your garden has been neglected, you still have the opportunity to uncover the beauty that once was with an understanding of what lies beneath. The landscape architect or designer will collaborate with you on the path to a beautiful garden.

Consider the edges to garden beds. Your garden expands over time (just like we do — or some of us, anyway) and may need more room to be comfortable. Edging can be done simply with a shoveled edge or set with an edging material, such as steel or stone. Also, the designer can offer a fresh look to the overall appeal to the lines set by garden bed edges.

If you have been a steward to your landscape for some time, you may notice that areas of the landscape tend to express themselves with less enthusiasm. Consider if perennials need to be divided. Sun and light conditions may have changed with growth of surrounding trees. Soil may need compost to improve overall growing conditions. This rejuvenation will offer a fresh face to the garden. There are many new exciting shrubs and perennials to consider.

Look at your hardscape and what it's offering you. How is it meeting, or more importantly, not meeting your needs? Does it satisfy the groups you like to entertain? Hardscape refers to walks, patios, walls, and any other site

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HOME & GARDEN

SUMMER



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features that are not related to plants. Maybe at this point, an investment in some additional accessories would help to refresh the area. Adding new furniture, a new grill, a pergola to really create an outdoor room, or a hot tub can help redefine your outdoor space as an extension of your home with the same detail to function, color, and comfort. That outdoor kitchen or fireplace will definitely set the stage to your outdoor room. Consideration of all the possibilities will be part of the design process with your landscape architect, and time well spent in the planning process will give you the most enjoyment to your landscape.

Another layer to your landscape to consider is outdoor lighting. It is an exciting opportunity in an established landscape to consider lighting. Lighting defines direction, offers safety, highlights focal points, and sets a mood. Ultimately, it extends your time in the garden and, when done well, offers a soft veil of light that is integrated and unobtrusive.

Change does not need to be overwhelming or expensive. It could be simply adding a few containers in new fun colors with the addition of some lively plantings. Set a scale and style to the container to be an architectural focal point in the landscape. Further that effort with plantings that carry that emphasis. Look to using a tree or shrub in the container to heighten the impact. A well-placed container, planted well, will set the tone, punctuate a patio, and even invite your guests into your landscape. Referring back to our spa analogy, containers are the painted nails of the garden. They can be subtle effects to very vibrant accents to the overall landscape.

Finally, the garden beds could be refreshed with a new top dressing of mulch or compost. Don't we all enjoy a good top dressing? The fresh mulch will give the garden a well-tended appearance and cut down on weeds and conserve moisture. Also, it is much easier to top dress this time of year with plants just emerging after winter.

Your landscape is a part of your home. It is more than just a foundation planting and grass. Your landscape, if not already, can be an extension of your home with an aesthetic that reflects your home's architecture and your personality. Collaborating with a landscape architect or designer can give you that clear vision and path to a better landscape for to enjoy and live in for the upcoming summer. ■

Tom Kerby is a landscape architect at Southview Design. He has been a registered landscape architect for over 20 years, and has collaborated with architectural/engineering firms on projects across the country. He is crazy passionate about creating and building meaningful, beautiful spaces as part of the team at Southview Design: www.southviewdesign.com.

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INTERIOR DESIGN FOR EXTERIOR SPACES

BY KATE O'HARA | PHOTOGRAPHY BY TROY THIES PHOTOGRAPHY

Summer is quickly approaching and with the occasional perfectly sunny day already upon us, it's time to open our homes to the outdoors. So how to design our exteriors to be as comfortable as interiors?

And how to invite the outdoors in? When it comes down to it, designing for the summer is all about turning your cozy winter shelter into an open, light space, while also putting your fallow outdoor areas to work in ways that you'll truly enjoy. This can be a daunting task — one that often goes ignored. So where does that leave you? I've polled our designers at Martha O'Hara Interiors to come up with some basic guidelines for creating outdoor spaces that are functional, fun, and beautiful, too.

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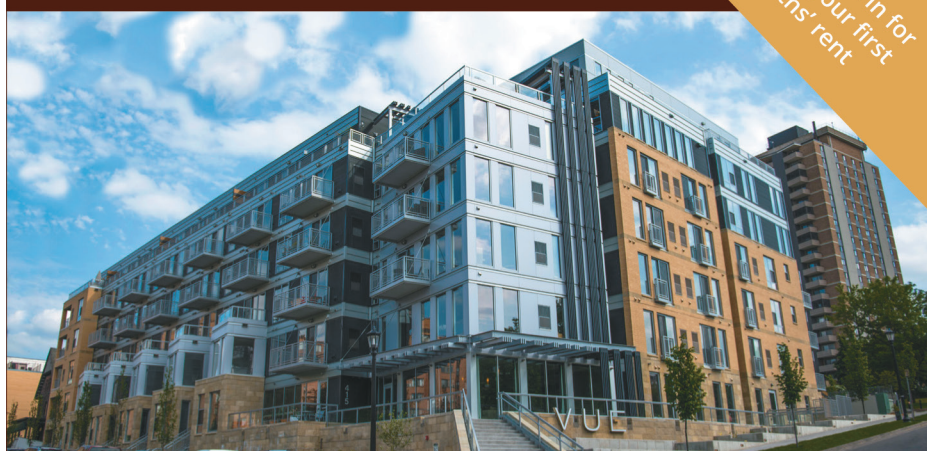
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HOME & GARDEN

SUMMER



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START WITH FUNCTION

One of the first mistakes people make when they put furniture outside, is that they don't start by giving honest consideration to how they want to spend time outside. Be realistic. Are you truly going to sit outside to read a book on lazy days? Are you actually going to have friends over to sit at that outdoor table? Having an honest conversation with yourself about how you'll use your outdoor areas will save you time, money, and a summer spent indoors.

CREATE VIGNETTES

Once you know how you want to spend your outside summer time, you can start thinking about the furniture you'll need in each area. Unlike our home interiors, our exteriors often don't have clearly delineated spaces for "rooms." For this reason, it is important to determine where you want your furnishings to go in a way that will imply a room, even if you don't have walls and boundaries surrounding it. Use outdoor rugs, seating arrangements, and dining areas to do this. And again, think about function. How likely are you to laze outside in a chair that won't let you lounge? Or without a side table for setting down a drink?

It's important to treat and design your outdoor areas with the same level of thoughtfulness that goes to your interiors. Doing this means thinking of each outdoor area as a separate room and designing accordingly.



INTERIOR DESIGN & PHOTO STYLING BY MARTHA O'HARA INTERIORS, REMODEL BY NOR-SON INC.

CREATE TRANSITION AREAS

Let's face it, after a long winter indoors, we all get into habits that keep us there. It's not enough to have comfortable spaces outside. We also have to adjust our interiors to encourage us out the door. Sometimes this can mean rearranging a room layout to allow traffic in and out of an entry that isn't used during the cold months. Other times it might mean setting up an area where food and drinks can be easily nabbed from outside without tromping through the house. Find ways to make

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your outdoor spaces extensions of your interior spaces, and you will be much more likely to use them.

MAKE IT COMFORTABLE

You wouldn't believe how often people take the time to consider steps one and two, only to put uncomfortable furnishings that they'll never want to use in their outdoor spaces. If you are truly determined to spend time outside this summer, then your furniture should be as comfy as the things you have inside. Don't miss out on an amazing summer outside just because you forgot that your iron chairs need pillows or that a recliner is a better place to nap than a straight-backed chair. Otherwise, you and your family will simply head back indoors where you already know you can relax and enjoy.

CASUAL COLORS

For those of us with three-season porches, spring is a time to clean them up and get them ready for heavy use. One of the best ways to make spaces like this feel inviting and fun is to choose one or two bright summer colors to use throughout the room in flatweave rugs, pillows, throws, and accessories. Design can be a daunting task, so make your life a little easier by keeping your color palette simple.

What's more, three-season rooms are spaces where we can let loose a bit and try things we might never consider in our main interiors. Got a shade of lemon yellow that you adore but are afraid to commit to inside? Now's your chance to give it a trial run! Plus, bright colors look amazing when you bring out bowls of fruit and glasses of lemonade on a warm summer day.

DON'T FORGET YOUR INTERIORS!

As important as outdoor spaces are during our precious summer months, we still use and enjoy our interiors all summer long. Spring is the perfect time to walk through your home and box up the heavy winter throws, pillows, and accessories that made your interior feel so cozy over the colder months. Now it's time to imbue your interiors with more light



INTERIOR DESIGN BY MARTHA O'HARA INTERIORS, BUILD BY STONEWOOD, LLC.

and maybe a bit more color, too.

Start creating your summer collection now! Just as you change your wardrobe from winter to summer, do the same with your interiors.

Here's wishing you and yours a summer spent in the sun! ■

Kate O'Hara is the marketing director of the award-winning Martha O'Hara Interiors in Minneapolis. For more information about interior design and décor, go to www.oharainteriors.com.

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CONTAINER GARDENING: A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH

BY FRANK BOHLANDER

Container gardens are a great way to add a splash of nature to any outdoor space. Decks, patios, and porches are all perfect choices.

STEP 1: SITE SELECTION

The first step is to consider where you want to place your container garden. Consider the amount of sun and how warm the location gets. Afternoon sun is warmer than morning sun. Lots of stone, brick, or cement will retain heat more than wood or grass.

STEP 2: CONTAINER SELECTION

Once you have decided where the garden will be placed, the next step is to select a container. There are lots of choices, from cast stone, glazed stoneware, and cast iron to inexpensive resin. I usually recommend a non-porous material, primarily for water retention. All of the materials above are non-porous. Drainage holes are also important.

Size is another important factor. The pot needs to fit the site, but be large enough to support the growth of the plants through the summer. In general, a larger volume of soil will produce more vigorous, healthier plants.

STEP 3: PLANT SELECTION

This is really the fun part of planting your container! You want to select plants that will have similar growing requirements, since they will all be planted together. Consider how the plants will change as they grow and mature through the season, and choose those that will still “fit” your container in August. I like to use different textures and colors mixed together to provide a lot of visual interest.

The most important thing to do while making your selections is to read care tags. The care tag will give you the information needed to know if the plant will be appropriate for your garden. Water, fertilizer, temperature, and sun requirements are all listed. Many will even tell you if they are good for container gardens. I suggest plants that are drought- and heat-tolerant, as most are placed in full sun. Some plants will bounce back better than others if you miss a watering. Dwarf varieties are also a plus, since they stay scaled to most containers.

Grasses are great for height, placed in the center or toward the back. Trailing plants like Calibrachoa are great along the edges. Mid-height plants like lantana fill in between. I often add something to attract hummingbirds or butterflies, just for fun. Fragrant herbs can also add texture and a quick addition to a summer meal!

STEP 4: PLANTING

Use a ready-mixed potting soil. Fill the pot with mix, leaving enough room to add your plants. Gently tamp the soil to make a firm base, and

place your plants on top. You can rearrange them to get the perfect look. As you remove plants from the grower's pot, you can break apart any roots that are circling the outside of the root ball. This will encourage new root growth and allow the roots to grow outward. Add extra soil under smaller plants, so that the tops are all at the same level and fill the gaps between plants. Again, gently tamp the soil into the space between plants to eliminate air pockets. When finished, the top of the soil should be 2" or so below the top edge of the pot, so you can easily add water. The last step in planting is to water thoroughly.

I often save the tags from the plants for reference. This way you can easily remember the varieties that you like and work well next spring when replanting.

STEP 5: CARE

Watering is the most important part of maintaining your garden. Mornings are best, making sure that the soil is completely saturated. Excess water will drain out through the bottom holes.

Fertilizer will also keep your plants flowering and healthy through the season. Some potting mixes have fertilizer pre-added, so no extra is needed. If you are replanting into last year's pot, you will want to add a bloom-booster, with a 10-15-10 (or similar) ratio of nutrients. The middle number, Phosphorus, should be higher to encourage flowering. Be sure to follow all application instructions on the label!

Pruning and dead-heading may also be needed as the plants grow and mature, keeping your garden looking perfect through the entire summer.

STEP 6: ENJOY!

Your container garden will provide the perfect ambiance for your outdoor space, so invite your neighbors over for a glass of wine and show them off. ■

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ADD EXTRA SOIL UNDER SMALLER PLANTS, THE LAST STEP IN PLANTING IS TO WATER THOROUGHLY. Photos by Hubert Bonnet

2015 Subaru Outback



For us, there are really two vehicles that we love the most. They both just happen to be Subarus.

We love Subarus because they were among the first automobile brands that loved us. That is simply an added benefit for Subaru ownership. In truth, they are highly practical, mostly offering standard all-wheel drive for year-round driving and are just simply easy to deal with. Subaru dealers tend to love us and our vehicles, plain and simple.

I mentioned we love two vehicles that happen to be Subarus. One of them is the Forester, our pick of the compact crossover/SUV class. The other is an old friend of ours. A familiar sight anywhere we roam, including out in rural communities. For twenty years, this wagon with a higher ground clearance has been the one vehicle our community cannot live without.

That vehicle is the Subaru Outback.

The reasons stated previously just scratch the surface of why we love the Outback to the point of it being as common as Ford F-150s and Toyota Camrys to other people. I still wonder if there were other reasons why the Outback is loved by our community. Granted, I will admit to not being a typical Outback driver. Though, I appreciate station wagons. In fact, it has been said that the perfect automotive journalist vehicle is a brown station wagon with a diesel engine and a manual gearbox. I wouldn't mind an automatic version myself, but I digress...

There has to be a deeper reason why the Outback has attracted many of our sisters and brothers to this outdoorsy, lifted station wagon for the past 20 years. To fulfill my curiosity, I had to find out why you love the Outback so much. So, I got one in to review: a Lapis Blue 2.5i Limited model. Maybe this will unlock those deep reasons why it has become the standard vehicle for the GLBT community.

The genesis of the Outback is from its mid-

sized product: the Legacy. Both vehicles were revised for the 2015 model year, with extended A-pillar areas and some tweaks on the outside. For the Outback, these tweaks made the wagon more aggressive for off-road duty. The 8.7-inch ground clearance raises the profile, but the Legacy-based wagon body makes the Outback more accessible, compared to a typical crossover/SUV.

The Outback does offer some advantages over a typical crossover/SUV. Overall height means not having to worry about fitting into smaller spaces, including garages. The doors have good width and open angle and the tailgate is perfect for tall people to load things without stooping down. Outbacks are distinctive enough to be familiar sights anywhere, even in places where the big SUVs rule the school drop-off and the grocery store parking lot.

When I think of the Outback, two words come to mind: rugged and friendly. That is how one should approach this ready-to-do anything wagon.

It is a different story inside. The "friendly" is there, but the 2.5i Limited model being tested here is also "refined." The leather seats are huge and quite comfortable. Though they would need some more bolstering to keep the body locked in those seats. Yet, the leather feels just fine and one could get a driving position that would fit for competent driving. Rear seat room is very good. A small transmission tunnel is in the way for a middle passenger, but you can fit three average-sized adults just fine. Even with the moonroof, headroom is no problem. Of course, not only do the split 60/40 rear backrests fold, they also recline.

Instrumentation is fine and easily readable. The center TFT screen offers trip, fuel economy, and active safety feature information. The controls are fine, especially on the steering wheel; however, some switches are below

the instrument panel's main line and are hard to reach for taller drivers. The console set up is also just fine with the gear lever toward the driver and two key off-road function switches available at the ready. Not to mention, this Limited has paddle shifters to make ratio changes quicker through the Continuously Variable Transmission.

Starlink is Subaru's infotainment system. It is a good one that has some advantages over some current systems in its competitors. For one, there is no need for a mobile app to facilitate the function of Pandora and Aha to be played back via Starlink. The setup to pair Bluetooth devices is quite easy and quick. The navigation screen is quite easy to read and very accurate. There is something interesting, however: you only get six presets for SiriusXM. I could use more, but for most drivers, that might be okay. Sound for the Starlink system is filtered through twelve wonderful Harman Kardon speakers.

People think that crossovers and SUVs are great for the cargo space they offer. However, the space behind the rear seat is equal to the average popular compact crossover: 35.5 cubic feet. What you lose in cargo height, you gain in length. That also comes into play when you fold down the rear seat, providing a maximum of 73.3 cubic feet of cargo space.

You know it is a Subaru when you open up the hood. The 2.5-liter horizontally opposed four-cylinder engine is without peers. However, there is 175 horsepower with 174 pound-feet of torque available, it is enough to manage 3,633 pounds of wagon and tow up to 2,700 pounds. The aforementioned continuously variable transmission, called Lineartronic, connects the boxer engine to its Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive system. In all, it does the job nicely, both on the road and off of it. By "off-road," I mean gravel and dirt tracks away from

the tarmac. That is where the Outback is truly exceptional. It also helps to have a feature called X-Mode, which adjusts the AWD system to conditions, including managing steep declines through the Hill Descent Control. On its own, the Outback can handle a lot of situations that it encounters every day.

By having an 8.7-inch ground clearance, you expect the ride to be managed well with such a long wheel travel. You do hear the tires on bumps and potholes, while the suspension does its best to absorb these hazards. Even the suspension works well on absorbing gravel surfaces. The Bridgestone Dueler tires equipped on the Outback may look more like on-road crossover tires, but they really do a good job gripping on non-tarmac surfaces. However, handling is on the soft side. Some lean is felt in the corners, if pushed. Otherwise, the Outback is very poised through any maneuver.

Steering action is also quite good. Turns are fine and it has a decent turning radius for tight spots. On-center feel is exact and steering wheel weight is balanced. Braking's also quite good. It does linear and smooth stops in both normal and panic situations.

On this 2.5i Limited tester is Subaru's EyeSight system. This optical camera/sensor

system enables a suite of active safety features that work extremely well on the Outback. The 2.5i Limited has the EyeSight connected to a good active cruise control system, pre-collision braking, vehicle sway warning, lane departure warning, and blind spot monitoring systems. The rearview camera on the Starlink screen also offers blind spot warnings on it, along with rear cross-traffic warnings. As a result, to this emphasis on safety systems that truly work well, the Outback won the Insurance Institute of Highway Safety's Top Safety Pick award and earned a five-star rating from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration based on various crash testing methodologies.

If there is a way to settle the argument between getting a typical compact crossover/SUV and getting the Subaru Outback, take a look at fuel economy. The 24.7MPG average may seem low, but most of its compact crossover/SUV rivals actually fall in this fuel economy range.

The Outback lineup is priced from \$24,895. This 2.5i Limited tester came with a sticker price of \$34,207. If you think about it, this is about where most similarly equipped mainstream compact crossover/SUVs are priced.

Perhaps it is no mystery why the Subaru Outback is a vehicle we simply call our own. It

does a lot of things well for us: great year-round traction, decent comfort for four-to-five people, good cargo carrying space, and decent fuel economy. However, it is not an exclusive vehicle to our community. Many kinds of people drive Outbacks to the point where you can count them in the dozens on a daily drive. Perhaps it is the added bonus that Subaru of America still loves our community and sponsors events that involve us, such as Dining Out For Life.

As for a vehicle that fits our lives, the Outback could be the perfect choice. Emphasizing practicality, year-round capabilities, a comfortable space for everyone and, now, a level of technology to keep you safe and informed, there is no wonder why we love this all-wheel drive, lifted station wagon.

Above all, this is the perfect vehicle for active lifestyles. Maybe that's the big reason why people buy them — us, them, and everyone else that visits a Subaru showroom. That is the big reason why the Outback resonates with a lot of us. We live active lifestyles, right? We love loading up our vehicles with our pets, our lives, and so on.

All of these reasons are why we loved our Outbacks for the past twenty years. This is why Subaru is happy to sell them to us. I can see why now. ■

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OUR VOICES

SKIRTING THE ISSUES | BY ELLEN KRUG

Sensei

Talk about serendipity.

It was a hot, steamy Friday in early August 2006, in Cedar Rapids. Still presenting as a crew cut man with glasses then, I wore a suit that day — Mr. Lawyer — because I had been in court. Now late afternoon, I sat in my shiny black BMW at a downtown bank drive-through making a deposit and chatting with the remote teller via closed circuit TV.

A woman in shorts and a tank top appeared on the nearby sidewalk. We made eye contact as she took the few steps to my car and asked, “Can you tell me if there’s an outdoor café around here?” She was visiting from Minneapolis and had some down time to explore this foreign place on the prairie.

I sized her up in the second before replying. She was blonde and cute, a bit short — both in hair and stature — and wore a BlackBerry on her hip.

“Well, there’s sort of an outdoor place,” I answered. I started down a list of directions to a coffee shop that hosted a couple rusty tables and chairs on a cracking sidewalk, only to be interrupted by the bank teller, who sat in a windowless office a block away and thus couldn’t see what was going on.

“Is everything alright?” asked the TV screen voice.

“Yes,” I replied. “I’m talking to someone who needs help with something.”

I quickly realized that it would be much easier to simply drive this stranger to the coffee shop than it would be to give her directions.

“I’ll just take you there,” I said. “Why don’t you get in the car?”

The woman hesitated.

I turned to the TV screen and pleaded, “Could you please tell this person that I’m safe?”

The bank teller smiled, “Oh, we love Ed. He’s so nice!”

That was enough to convince the stranger — who quickly shared her name, Colleen — to get in my car.

We never made it to the coffee shop and instead ended up at my favorite downtown bar. A moment’s camera click would have caught two strangers giggling, a mutual attraction unfolding, and the beginning of an on-again, off-again, on-again romance that would last nearly a year.

Before it ended, Colleen changed my life. She was wise and fearless, a survivor in many ways, and loving. Most of all, she was Buddhist, something which at first repelled me — I grew up Catholic (yikes!) and knew absolutely nothing about Buddhism; I thought of it as a voodoo religion.

“You’re suffering because you grasp for

things that aren’t attainable,” she said countless times. “The world doesn’t operate according to the Krug Plan.”

And thus I started down a very long road toward understanding basic Buddhist precepts. I came to learn how all of us are interconnected in so many ways, joint participants in the human condition. Phrases that Colleen regularly tossed about — like gratitude, compassion and kindness, and mindfulness — became my phrases, too.

Most important for me was newly understanding that my fear of various things, such as how transitioning genders could negatively impact my then-teenage daughters or my law practice, caused me to both vacillate and avoid transitioning.

Eventually, I found enlightenment through Buddhism, which allowed me to face my fears and begin the long and arduous process of shifting from male to female. Eventually, what I had feared in fact came true (I lost one daughter [thankfully, only temporarily] and my law practice), but nonetheless, as a Buddhist I took those losses in stride. Just as Colleen had instructed, I didn’t suffer the losses and instead accepted them as inevitable.

The seismic change in my life took me to Minneapolis, where I made a fresh start. I often tell others that but for meeting Colleen and becoming Buddhist myself, I wouldn’t have found the freedom (or courage) to be the true me, Ellie.

Fast forward to another camera click, one that again catches Colleen and me, but this time it’s April 2015, over dinner at an outdoor restaurant in South Minneapolis. Reconnected now as friends, I tease about how I had to coax her into my car on that day in Cedar Rapids. We laugh at the silly things we learned about each other during our love affair.

Our laughter masks profound sadness, something which preceded meeting. “My body’s riddled with cancer,” Colleen reminds. She doesn’t have much time left.

I soon sob and grab her hand to kiss it. In between tears, I say “I don’t want you to go, Colleen. I want you to stay in this world.”

Of course, I was back to grasping.

Ever the teacher, Colleen again instructs: “I’ve had a good life with my family and friends. We are nothing in the end, other than grains of dust.” Still, I see that she is crying, too.

“Please know that you’ll live on in me,” I offer. “You are my sensei and your wonderful words are now part of me. When I talk to others about compassion and kindness or gratitude, truly it’s you who is speaking.”

Colleen smiles.

We’re silent for a moment, good Buddhists taking in the moment. At night’s end, we hug and I hold tight. I don’t want to let go.

But knowing so much more now, I let her slip free. ■

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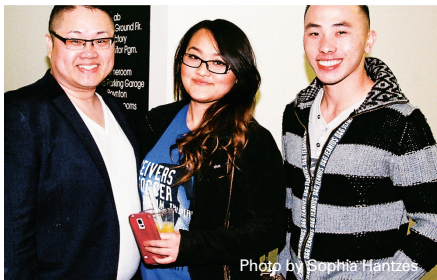


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King of the Bullies

Logan Kinlaw. Seventh grade bully, bully to the gods. I was quiet and awkward; Logan was obnoxious and powerful. We were equally unpopular, me for my social ineptitude, Logan for his tyranny.

Logan had no parallel. He didn't lower himself to name-calling; "pansy," "pussy," "fag" — favorites of his underlings — were too cliché, too easy. What made Logan so lethal was his perceptiveness: he knew more than how to bully, he knew why bullying worked. He identified in his victims' insecurities at their roots, emotions that no other 12-year-old could recognize. Logan understood that truly distressing his targets meant diving deep, into corners to which even we were unaware: fears of loss, sexual abuse, loneliness, death.

He never threatened us with physical violence; he put many into the pavement — sent at least one to the hospital — but he did so reactively, to silence foolhardy challengers. Fighting was beneath him. Logan killed his victims from within, and most torturous were his whispered attacks. We all knew when one was coming.

Seventh grade, boys' locker room, fourth period. Everyone but Logan and I is laughing and teasing one another as they file out of the locker room and into the gym. I'm on a bench, tying my tennis shoes.

"Hey, Justin," Logan says as he approaches from behind. Like all of his harshest attacks, his tone is unsettlingly pleasant. I pretend not to hear him and stand, shoes untied, and start my way out with the other boys.

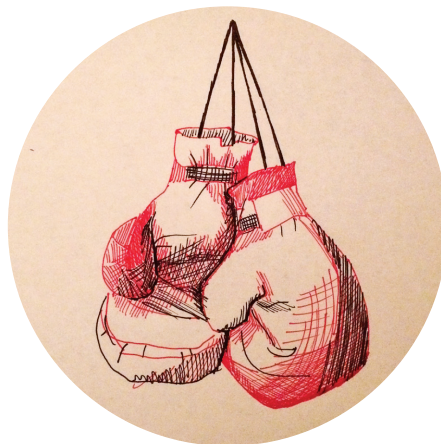
"Justin," he says a bit louder. I stop. He knows I've heard him. Before I turn to face him, a boy in front of me glances back with sympathetic eyes.

I turn to Logan. He walks to me, stands uncomfortably close, rests his hands on my shoulders, puts his lips to my ear, and slowly pushes his body into mine, his chest first, then his legs, then his groin. I'm instantly and at once terrified and aroused. His breath is steady, sensual, warm on my ear. He smells clean and masculine. As he pushes into me, I wonder if he's gay. Maybe he's spared me because he likes me. He's never done this to anyone. Of course, his attacks were always innovative.

"Justin," he whispers. His breath smells of Listerine and Jolly Ranchers. "I know you're queer. And I know you like me. I know the way you stare at me, and at everyone else." He pushes further into me, puts his hands on my waist, pulls me in. "And I want you to know

that if you weren't born so f*cking ugly, if you weren't so f*cking disgusting to look at, your wrists weren't so small, your head so big, your arms so thin, if you weren't so pathetic to talk to, if you weren't too stupid to see that everyone already knows you're queer, maybe if your dead mother—" He grabs my head, thumbs on my cheeks, and stares into my eyes. I'm already crying, trembling, burning all over. His tone remains soothing, his touch remains gentle, but his eyes are red and murderous. He says things about my mother and other members of my family that I cannot repeat in this magazine.

I jerk away from him, he grabs me, I jerk away again. Let him hit me. I don't care. I see only my mother. The world looks different now. I'm not here. I'm looking at myself from above, flying away. He comes to me again and rests his hands on either side of my head and continues with concerned eyes: "What's the matter, sexy? Wanna talk to your mom?" He



pushes into me again, grinds into me, more aggressively than before.

"Justin!" calls out a classmate rounding the corner into the locker room. He sees Logan. He sees me. Together. Touching.

Logan does not look away, nor does he move at first. He stares for a moment longer, softly kisses my cheek and walks off, shoving past the boy.

What ensued was a year of torment from virtually all of my peers. I was ostracized, the target of bullies who didn't know me, and a "faggot" to everyone else. The story, however outlandish, stuck because Logan so decreed. He faced no repercussions for "pretending" he was "queer" to test my sexuality. The blame was mine. I wasn't to be trusted in the locker room. My classmates made me wait in the bathroom while they changed into their gym

clothes and they laughed when I emerged. Yet they and others laughed with sad eyes: they knew the truth, for how silly it'd be to make a move on Logan of all people. I imagine now that my classmates felt sorry for me then, but their role was to survive; mine was to endure.

Far more devastating, though, was Logan's "inside" attack. He had read my insecurities all too accurately. He knew I was insecure about my looks, that, like so many others, I was afraid of rejection, but he knew too that my weaknesses originated from a deeper place. It escapes me even today how he knew about my mother's death, about other things he later mentioned, about my dysmorphia, and how he managed to thread them all together: I feared dying like my mother, who'd prioritized vanity over friendship, and had lost her beauty by the end, leaving her alone at death. Until Logan, I'd never before drawn — or even could've comprehended — so fundamental a wound.

The public confirmation that I was gay, an accusation I knew never to refute ignited dangerous suicidal thoughts. Logan knew that to take me down for good meant appealing to the superficial recoil gay students faced in class. Proving I was gay meant raising an army of bullies to suffocate me.

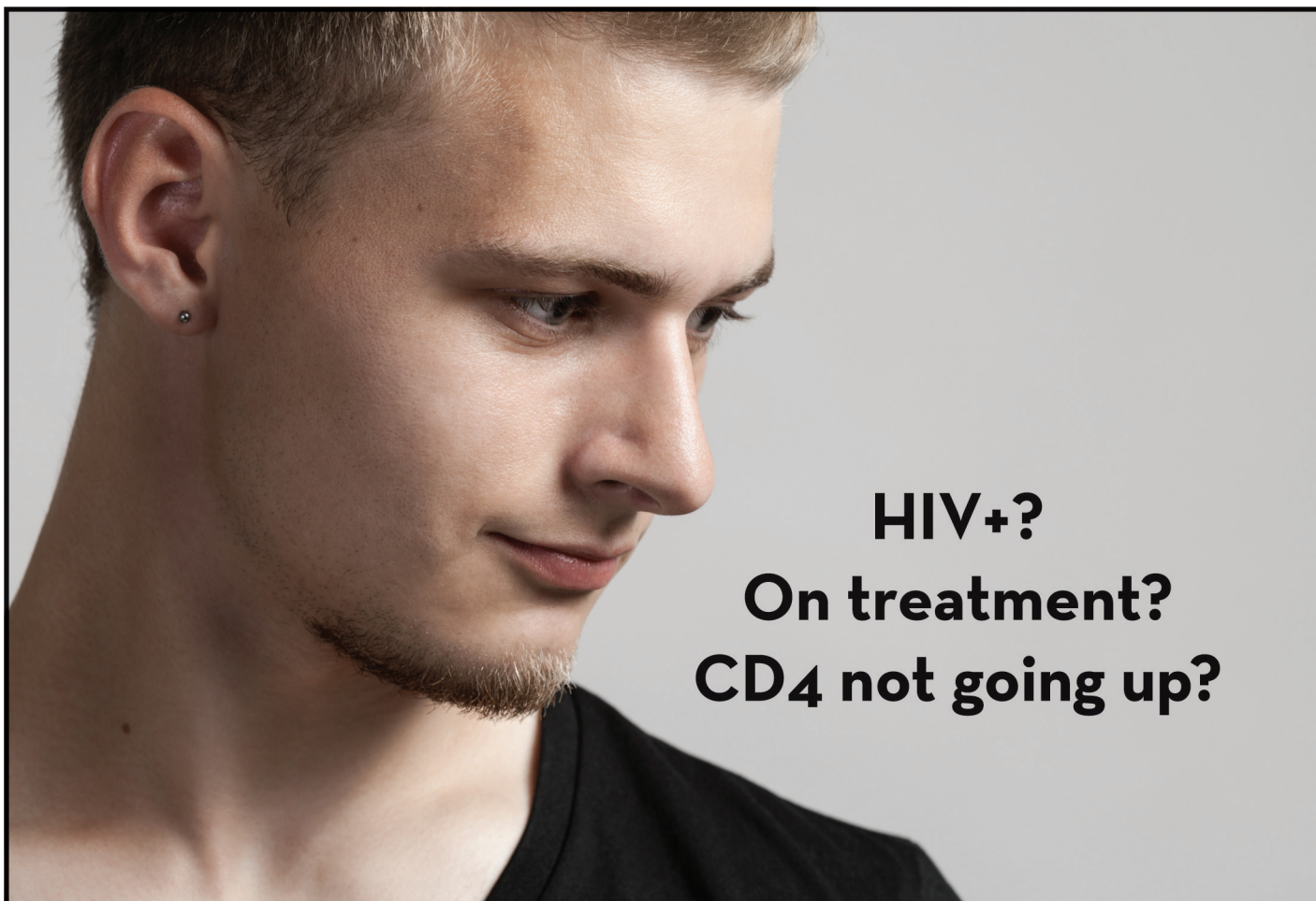
I changed schools before eighth grade.

I'm certain Logan wasn't the mastermind this piece makes him out to be. He may have been a smart bully, but even he couldn't have understood the network of emotions he provoked. Yet that wasn't his genius as a bully. His genius was in that he had the ability to leave his victims with enough loose ends that his words haunted them — bullied "their insides." He created time bombs.

I don't know what happened to Logan (that's not his real name, of course). I've scoured the Internet searching for him on and off for years, looking for a criminal record, a high school reunion membership, a college alumni association, a Facebook, a Twitter, anything. But my searches always turn up empty. I suppose this shouldn't surprise me. No one ever really knew who he was; he knew us better than we knew ourselves.

Logan lives now only in my seventh grade yearbook, smiling brightly into the camera. ■

For the unabridged version of "King of the Bullies" got to www.lavendermagazine.com. To contact Justin, use ThroughTheseEyes.JustinJones@gmail.com.



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